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# SOME RECENT MOVEMENTS IN CITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

By

W. S. DEFFENBAUGH  
CHIEF OF CITY SCHOOL DIVISION

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# SOME RECENT MOVEMENTS IN CITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

By W. S. DEFFENBAUGH

*Chief of City School Division*

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So extensive and so complex has the modern city school system become that it is impossible in a brief chapter to treat more than a few of the recent educational movements. In addition to day schools the activities of the city school system include night schools, continuation schools, special schools, health supervision, vocational instruction, vocational guidance, clinics, etc. Reviews of some of these activities appear in other chapters of the Biennial Survey of Education, and discussion of them in this chapter is unnecessary.

## ADMINISTRATION

Nothing more than usual is reported in the field of general administration. Having small school boards elected at large has become the prevailing practice. Some difference of opinion still exists regarding the method of choosing boards of education, though authorities in school administration are generally agreed that the elective plan is upon the whole to be preferred to any method of appointment by city or other officials.

The question of the relation of the city council to the board of education is perennial. Numerous instances might be given to show that there has been friction between them; but this is nothing new. Several attempts have been made to divorce school from municipal affairs. For instance, a bill sponsored by the New Haven Teachers' League, to make the board of education independent of the city officials, was defeated at a recent session of the Connecticut Legislature. The claim made by the teachers' league was that the finance board interfered unduly in the management of the schools. This, however, is an old story and may be duplicated in some of the other cities where the school boards are dependent upon the city officials for appropriations.

## ADAPTING THE SCHOOL TO INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Within the past few years possibly more attention has been given to adapting the school to individual differences than to any other phase of school administration. The fact that children differ in ability to progress through the grades has long been recognized,



but the general use of intelligence and achievement tests has emphasized the fact that there is a wide spread of mental ability in the same class—that some pupils are of the highest intelligence and others of very low intelligence. With all these facts before them, school administrators have come to see how absurd it is to expect children of the same chronological age but of different mental ages to progress through school at the same rate.

In order to provide for these individual differences serious attention is being directed toward plans that promise to break up what is known as the lock-step system of grading and promotion. In fact, since the beginning of the graded-school system various attempts have been made to devise plans to assure pupils' continuous progress through school without repetition of entire grades. Semi-annual promotion was considered a means toward this end. More frequent promotion intervals, however, are considered desirable if it is possible to provide them, and several such plans have been tried. When Dr. William T. Harris was superintendent of schools at St. Louis, Mo., he organized classes with about five-week intervals between them, so that the brighter and more industrious pupils could be advanced without skipping a grade, and so that pupils not able to sustain themselves in the classes to which they were assigned could drop back to the class below without losing a half year or even a whole year. Not many cities adopted this plan, yet it had great possibilities, especially in a large school building where five or six groups could be formed from the same grade. This plan may, however, be recognized to-day in the homogeneous grouping of pupils which is receiving serious attention in many cities. Of 215 cities furnishing information to the Bureau of Education as to the uses made of intelligence tests, 64 per cent are using them in the elementary school for grouping pupils according to ability, 56 per cent in the junior high school, and 41 per cent in the senior high school. A few years ago only a beginning had been made in so classifying pupils.

The question, however, has been raised whether the attempt to group children by ability would result in adaptation to individual differences. Dr. S. A. Courtis says:<sup>1</sup>

The Detroit results prove conclusively that, whether instruction be individualized or not, children of each level of intelligence, as shown by scores in mental tests, have a very wide range of achievement and very different rates of progress in any special skill \* \* \*. Intelligence is a factor determining progress, but by no means the only factor, so that grouping on an intelligence basis is only a partial solution of the problem of individual differences. A complete solution is furnished by individualization of instruction where any child, whether his intelligence is A, B, C, D, or E may go as fast or as slowly as his condition at the time demands.

<sup>1</sup> Part II, 24th Yearbook, Nat. Soc. for the Study of Education.



It is conceded that it is impossible to obtain perfectly homogeneous groups, since no two pupils are exactly alike. Even children with the same intelligence quotients vary widely in their school progress. It is a matter of common observation that lazy, intelligent pupils may not make as rapid progress in school as do the industrious ones who are less intelligent. What may be considered good grouping at the beginning of the school term may be found very poor a month or two after. Dr. Ernest Horn, of the University of Iowa, in summarizing studies made in Detroit, Mich., Los Angeles, Calif., Winnetka, Ill., San Francisco State Teachers College, and the University of Iowa, says:<sup>2</sup>

All these data, gathered by five groups of investigators working independently, point to this conclusion: Children do not fall into natural ability groups and can not be classified so as to yield homogeneous groupings; groups which appear relatively homogeneous at the time of classification soon vary more within themselves than they do from each other; different types and amounts of instruction are required by different children within each group; ability grouping does not solve the problem of adjusting schools to individual differences.

Although the homogeneous grouping of pupils is not an ideal plan for adjusting instruction to individual pupils, it is generally conceded that such grouping makes for better adaptation to individuals than does undifferentiated mass instruction. If, for instance, there are four fifth-grade classes in a school building, it is better to divide them into four or more groups on the basis of ability than it is to assign to each of the four teachers children of all degrees of ability and at all stages of progress within the fifth grade.

Designed to reach the individual child more completely than does any method of grouping, several plans of individual instruction that have attracted wide attention may be mentioned. One of these plans originated at the State Teachers College, San Francisco, and has been adopted in other places under city school conditions. Winnetka, Ill., has given the plan the most thorough trial.

Another plan of individual instruction, known as the Dalton plan, originated at about the time Winnetka began its experiment. The Dalton plan has been more widely adopted in England and other European countries than in the United States. Among the schools in this country that have adopted the plan are the South Philadelphia High School for Girls, Philadelphia Trade School, the Manhattan Trade School of New York City, and the Children's University School, under the direction of Miss Helen Parkhurst, New York City.

That more attention should be given to individualized instruction seems evident. The fact that children should be socialized must

<sup>2</sup>Part II, 24th Yearbook, Nat. Soc. for the Study of Education, p. 166.



not be forgotten. The elimination of all class instruction is not advocated even by the most enthusiastic supporters of any of the plans of individualized instruction. The Winnetka plan calls for a large amount of socializing work, as does the Dalton plan, through its provision for conferences and discussions.

### TEACHERS' SALARIES

Most cities have awakened to the fact that in order to maintain efficient school systems salaries equal at least in purchasing power to those of 1914 must be paid. Some cities have advanced salaries to such an extent that their purchasing power is greater than in 1914, and others have made only nominal increases—with the result that the real salary is less now than in 1914. On the whole, however, teachers' salaries in city schools today exceed in purchasing power the salaries paid in 1914.<sup>3</sup> Since 1922-23 there has been little increase in teachers' salaries, amounting on an average to about 3 per cent.

During the biennium considerable attention has been given to the formulation of salary schedules and to plans for rating teachers. The single-salary schedule—that is, equal pay for equal training and experience—whether the teacher teaches in an elementary or a high school, is growing in favor among superintendents and teachers. The chief advantages claimed for this type of schedule are the following:

1. It is easy to operate and permits better business methods.
2. It eliminates class consciousness among teachers.
3. It contributes strongly to a feeling of unity and satisfaction in the corps.
4. By financial recognition of additional experience and training, it promotes tenure.
5. It attracts superior ability and training to the elementary schools and gives elementary teachers a higher appreciation of their services.
6. It emphasizes high standards of professional attainment and encourages professional study and growth, thus producing more efficient teaching in every grade.
7. It permits the transfer of teachers without financial loss from positions for which they are not adapted to positions where they can render efficient service.

One of the arguments that has been advanced against such a schedule is its cost, since the increased expenditure for instruction would be considerable if all the teachers placed in the elementary schools were graduates of four-year courses in teachers' colleges. The question of cost, however, should not be considered if teachers with four years of training are needed in the elementary schools. This is the point that should be settled in the minds of school boards adopting a single-salary schedule. If such a schedule is adopted and then the school board continues to employ teachers with only two

<sup>3</sup> See Research Bulletin N. E. A., Public School Salaries, 1924-25.



years of training, the question at once arises, Why was such a schedule adopted? It is obvious, however, that whenever a school board sets the same standard of qualifications for elementary-school teachers as for high-school teachers the salary schedule should be the same. As already stated, the question to decide is whether elementary-school teachers should be required to attend normal school or college the same number of years as high-school teachers. If the answer is in the affirmative, there should be no hesitation in adopting a single salary schedule.

According to a study<sup>4</sup> made by Elmer H. Staffelbach, of Stanford University, the average superintendent considers three years of scholastic training above the high school adequate for the elementary-school teachers, four years of such training adequate for teaching in the junior high school, and five years for teaching in the senior high school.

Isaac O. Winslow, superintendent of schools of Providence, R. I., writing on the adjustment of teachers' salaries, says, regarding equal pay for equal preparation:

It is easy to understand that such a scheme as this may be very comfortable for the administrators of the system. The certificate of academic attainment is definite and automatically determines the salary. No troublesome questions can arise in the application of the rule. But there are serious questions that should be considered from an outside standpoint. Will the method stand the test of searching criticism?<sup>5</sup>

#### EQUAL PAY FOR MEN AND WOMEN

The question of equal pay for men and women doing the same kind of work has been discussed pro and con for several years, and some cities have adopted the plan of giving men and women equal pay. As a result, the school boards in these cities are being confronted with the following problems: Shall the salaries of women teachers be increased so as to equal those of the men, or shall the salaries of the men be reduced to equal those of the women, or shall there be an averaging of the salaries so that the school budget may not be increased? If the salaries of the men are lowered, will not many of them leave the profession? The question may be asked, If all salaries are raised to the level of the men's salaries, what will be the result? It has been predicted that more men will be employed. Heretofore school boards have been paying men more than women because men could not be had for the salaries paid the women teachers; but owing to the fact that men had to be paid more, only a few men have been employed in many school systems.

Certainly there should be no leveling-down process. If equal-pay laws mean anything, they mean that the salaries of women should be

<sup>4</sup> Am. Sch. Bd. Jour., Feb., 1925

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



raised to equal those of the men; discrimination should not be tolerated, but the men must not be driven out of the schools by lowering their salaries to equal those now paid women in cities where the women receive less salary than the men.

#### RECENT SALARY SCHEDULES

A recent salary schedule that has attracted attention is the one adopted by Congress for the District of Columbia. After one year of satisfactory probationary service teachers serve on tenure. Teachers with experience elsewhere may be placed in the fifth year of the elementary schedule and in the sixth year of the high-school and normal-school schedules. The schedule provides for Group A and Group B teachers. The Group B schedule provides for those teachers whose superior teaching, advanced study, and higher professional qualifications justify larger salaries than those paid teachers in Group A. The schedule for elementary and high school teachers is as follows:

*Teachers' salary schedule in the District of Columbia*

Classification	Minimum salary	Annual increase	Period of years for which annual increase is granted	Maximum salary
Class I.—Kindergarten and elementary teachers:				
Group A.....	\$1,400	\$100	8	\$2,200
Group B.....	2,300	100	3	2,600
Class II.—Junior-high-school teachers:				
Elementary-school qualifications—				
Group A.....	1,600	100	8	2,400
Group B.....	2,500	100	3	2,800
High-school qualifications—				
Group C.....	1,800	100	10	2,800
Group D.....	2,900	100	3	3,200
Class III.—Senior-high and normal-school teachers:				
Group A.....	1,800	100	10	2,800
Group B.....	2,900	100	3	3,200

The salary schedule of Denver, Colo., given on page 7, may be cited as an illustration of a single salary schedule.

*Teachers' salary schedule in Denver, Colo.*

	Minimum	Maximum	Yearly increases
1. Minimum training ((1) normal school graduation or equivalent, (2) high school plus two years).	\$1,200	\$2,040	7 of \$120.
2. Minimum training plus one year (high school plus three years).	1,200	2,280	2 of \$120 above \$2,040 maximum.
3. Minimum training plus two years (high school plus four years). For teachers with four years of professional training not organized so as to obtain a degree from a standard college or university.	1,200	2,520	2 of \$120 above \$2,280 maximum.
4. A. B. degree from standard college or university.....	1,350	2,880	9 of \$150 and 1 of \$180.
5. A. M. degree.....	1,350	3,080	2 of \$100 above A. B. maximum.
6. Teachers who began their services subsequent to Sept. 4, 1917, and who have less than the minimum requirement as to preparation.		1,800	6 of \$100.



## GROWTH OF WORK-STUDY-PLAY OR PLATOON SCHOOLS

The number of cities having work-study-play or platoon schools continues to increase. The first platoon school was organized by Supt. William Wirt, in Bluffton, Ind., in 1902, and the second was organized by him in Gary, Ind., in 1907. From 1907 to 1913, 4 cities—Kalamazoo, Mich., Kansas City, Mo., New Castle, Pa., and Sewickley, Pa.—organized 15 schools on the platoon plan; from 1914 to 1920, 35 other cities organized 148—that is, the increase was at the rate of 21 schools a year; and from 1921 to February, 1925, 53 cities organized schools on the plan. By April, 1925, 93 cities, having a total population of more than 16,000,000, in 30 States had the platoon plan in one or more schools. Half the cities with a population of 100,000 or more, 1 out of every 5 cities with a population of 30,000 or more, and 31 cities with a population of 2,500 to 30,000 have platoon schools. These cities are of all types, from large industrial centers to wealthy suburbs.

In April, 1925, there were more than 500 schools on the platoon plan in the 93 cities. Twenty-one of the 93, or one-fourth of the total number, have adopted this form of school organization as a city-wide policy and are adding new schools each year. Akron, Ohio, Birmingham, Ala., Dallas, Tex., Detroit, Mich., Gary, Ind., Philadelphia, Pa., Pittsburgh, Pa., and Sacramento, Calif., fall into this group. Twenty-one of the 93 cities have introduced the platoon plan into nearly half their elementary schools. Ten have adopted it for their junior or senior high schools as well as elementary schools—Gary, Ind., East Chicago, Ind., Franklin, N. J., Greer, S. C., Newark, N. J., and Saginaw, W. S., Mich., fall into this class.

The platoon schools vary in size from 100 to 3,000 pupils. Of 369 schools providing information in regard to size, 63 have from 100 to 500 pupils, 136 have from 500 to 800 pupils, 137 from 800 to 1,500 pupils, and 33 from 1,500 to 3,000 pupils. In many instances the same city—for example, Birmingham, Ala.—has schools in each of these groups.

*Standing of platoon-school pupils in academic work compared with nonplatoon-school pupils.*—In all cases reported in which educational tests have been given comparing the academic work of pupils in platoon schools and in nonplatoon schools, the standing of the platoon-school pupils is equal to or superior to that of the pupils in the nonplatoon schools.

The superintendent of schools of Birmingham, Ala., reported in 1924 that—

During the past school year two groups of children in Grades IV to VIII were selected by the department of research of the Birmingham public schools, one from several nonplatoon schools, the other from several platoon schools. These children were approximately equal in their ability to learn and the



amount of learning already acquired, in intellectual maturity, and in the number of days in attendance during the period of investigation. On December 15 they were measured by a standardized test in arithmetic, reading, history, literature, language, geography, and spelling for the amount of learning they had acquired up to that time. Four months later they were measured again by a test of equal difficulty to see how much they had gained in all these subjects. This test shows that while the average pupil in the nonplatoon schools made a gain of nearly 51 points in his score, the average pupil in the platoon schools made a gain of almost 66 points in the same period, or 29.5 per cent more than the one in the other type school. The amount of gain is such that, according to the experiences of the best authorities in educational measurement, should the investigation be repeated an infinite number of times, the chances are 20 to 1 that there would be a substantial difference in favor of the platoon schools.

A report issued October 22, 1924, by the department of research and measurement, Pittsburgh public schools, Pittsburgh, Pa., where there are 40 platoon schools, records the results of educational tests in spelling and arithmetic given to pupils in platoon and nonplatoon schools. The report states that—

In arithmetic it is evident that the platoon group is superior in all grades in that function of arithmetic which we call reasoning. The platoon schools, however, maintain almost the same supremacy when the scores for correct answers are considered. At no point do they go below the corresponding median score of the nonplatoon group. \* \* \* All grades considered, in both arithmetical accuracy and arithmetical reasoning, the platoon type of school organization in Pittsburgh shows superiority over the nonplatoon type. Previous surveys in spelling and reading show similar superiority in favor of the platoon group. This superiority in the three R's is worthy of commendation in view of the fact that the platoon school carries an enriched curriculum. In addition to all the other excellent enriched activities, the platoon schools in Pittsburgh furnish more adequate training in the three R's than do the nonplatoon schools.\*

Supt. S. O. Hartwell, of St. Paul, Minn., in an article published in the *Elementary School Journal*, February, 1925, "A sidelight on platoon schools," gives the result of tests in platoon and nonplatoon schools in spelling, arithmetic, reading, and language. He prints graphs which he summarises as follows:

There was clear advantage of the platoon schools over the other schools not only in the general curve for each subject but in practically three-fourths of the grades, subject by subject. \* \* \* Two factors seem to be largely responsible for the success of the platoon schools. First, the academic teacher of platoon classes is relieved of most of the special work. \* \* \* The teacher's freedom from special subjects, therefore, makes for better concentration on the part of both teacher and pupil in the regular recitation, and concentration produces results. Second, supervision is better adjusted, an advantage in both the regular and special subjects. In a word, the teaching staff in a platoon school is seldom intrinsically superior to that in other buildings, but it is better classified and organized, which, in turn, leads to improved results.

\* *Arithmetic Survey, Pittsburgh Pub. Schls., Dept. of Res. and Meas., Bul. No. 6, Oct. 22, 1924, p. 37.*



*Attitude of superintendents in schools in cities of 100,000 population or more toward the platoon plan.*—In September, 1924, the United States Commissioner of Education wrote to all superintendents of schools in the 68 cities having a population of 100,000 or more the following letter:

The Bureau of Education, in response to a very general demand, has been endeavoring to collect full and complete information about the platoon system of schools. It is not the policy of the Bureau of Education to advocate or oppose the introduction of this or any other particular type of school organization, but we wish to be in a position to furnish information both with reference to the advantages and disadvantages of this plan.

In order to enable us to carry out this policy, will you be kind enough to write me your opinion of the platoon system. Give us frankly the benefit of your experience, observation, and study, both as to the merits and demerits of the platoon school.

Of the 56 cities replying, 24 had one or more schools on the platoon plan. All of these 24 cities were favorable to the plan, although one superintendent stated that as the platoon school in his city had just been organized they could not yet report on results.

Of the remaining 32 cities which did *not* have schools on the work-study-plan or platoon plan, 3 superintendents reported that they were in favor of the plan; 1 reported that he was planning to have a platoon school during the next year; 5 said that they were not committed for or against the plan; 1 reported, "We have not adopted it. We do not have the necessary halls and gymnasias for a fair trial of the plan"; 10 reported that they had "no experience with the plan and therefore had no opinion"; 3 gave no opinion at all; 3 confused the plan with the double session system by which half the children in a school come in the morning and the other half in the afternoon; and only 4 superintendents reported that they were unfavorable to the plan.

In other words, out of a total of 56 cities, 53.5 per cent of the total number were favorable to the plan or were planning to have schools on this type of school organization; 39 per cent gave no opinion or said they were not committed for or against the plan, or that they had not started it because they did not have the necessary equipment, or confused the plan with the double session system; and only 7 per cent of all the cities were not favorable to the plan.

#### RESEARCH AND TESTS

A few years ago all questions of school policy were settled largely upon the basis of mere opinion. To-day mere opinion does not play such a prominent part in school administration, but as scientific data is often lacking it still plays a very large part. Whatever opinion is offered should be based upon facts, if there are any available, rather than upon theory. School people, however, are slowly



becoming more scientific. Boards of education, if composed of men and women accustomed to dealing with data, do not listen to orations but ply the superintendents with questions regarding the most successful practices in school administration.

Not content to depend upon guess work, boards of education are establishing research bureaus to collect and compile data regarding practically every phase of their respective school systems.

In 1923 there were about 80 research bureaus connected with city school systems; now there are about 120 such bureaus, although they are not always so designated. In some of the cities, especially the smaller ones, a supervisor may do the educational research work. In some of the larger cities the research work is under the direction of an assistant superintendent.

The scope of a fully organized research bureau may be best explained by briefly describing the research bureau of Detroit, Mich.:

The function of the department of instructional research in the city of Detroit appears to be that of a headquarters; it formulates the educational policies to be carried out throughout the city school system. Its labors take the form of testing the work, surveying the work done, and appraising policies in order to make and keep them efficient and truly serviceable. These labors are performed by its own staff, by the department of supervision, and by the personnel of the schools themselves. These comprehensive units are interwoven in organization and cooperative in activity, while each maintains its own individuality for the furtherance of mutual service.

When the department was opened in 1914, 10 aims were set up by its director: (1) To measure the efficiency of the teaching; (2) to increase the number of children benefiting by school work; (3) to eliminate waste in subject matter and methods; (4) to aid in the adjustment of school training to the world's needs; (5) to help teachers give greater assistance to individual children in accordance with the peculiar weaknesses, and (5a) to help teachers give greater facilities to individual children in accordance with their particular aptitudes; (6) to set up objective standards, reasonable because based upon the measured ability of children, so that each child may have the pleasure of success; (7) to aid the superintendent and others in the preparation of reports; (8) to aid in the continued professional training of teachers; (9) to supply any information about the Detroit system that may be wanted; (10) to maintain year after year a critical study of the Detroit public schools, in order that each year the same may be made more efficient.

As a result of educational research in Detroit, a number of standardized tests and practice materials have been developed sufficiently to create a general demand for them throughout the country. Among these are the Courtis standard practice tests in arithmetic, the Courtis standard practice tests in handwriting, the Detroit first-grade intelligence test, the Detroit kindergarten test, Courtis-Smith picture-story reading lessons, and Detroit word-recognition test.

A few years ago the use of intelligence and achievement tests in the elementary and secondary schools was looked upon as a fad, but to-day the school superintendents who do not use such tests find themselves in a small reactionary group looking on and protesting as the educational world moves away from them.



At first the standardized tests were used largely for the purpose of comparing one's school with the standard score or with the scores made in other cities of the same size. This is no doubt one of the valuable uses of such tests, but it has been found that they may be used for many purposes.

General intelligence tests are chiefly used for classifying pupils into homogeneous groups and for supplementing the teachers' estimates of pupils' ability. They are used also for diagnosing causes of failure of admission to the first grade of the elementary school and for determining the promotion of pupils.

An outgrowth of the use of such tests is the new type of examination that has been introduced into many schools. The old general question type of examination was not easily graded. One teacher would grade a paper 90 per cent, another the same paper 70 per cent, and another 50 per cent or even less. The grading was purely subjective, depending upon the opinions of the persons doing the grading. The new type of examination admits of but one answer, which is either right or wrong. Since the pupil has to do little writing in this type of examination and the scorer little reading, the test can be made much more comprehensive than the old-style examination. The traditional high-school examination usually consists of 10 questions and requires two or three hours. The new type may consist of 50 or 100 questions and requires about an hour of the pupil's time.

In brief, the progressive schools of the country are now relying upon objective rather than upon subjective tests.

### THE ALL-YEAR SCHOOL

The movement to organize the city schools of the country on an all-year plan has made little progress. In fact in one city, Newark, N. J., where the plan has been in operation for many years, it was recommended that the all-year schools in that city be discontinued; the board of education decided, however, to continue them until September, 1925.

When the all-year plan was adopted in Newark it was believed that it would be possible—

1. To save two years of the time now regularly required to complete the elementary-school course.
2. To prove that under proper conditions of discipline and instruction pupils will suffer no physical or mental injury by reason of an additional eight weeks of school attendance during the months of July and August.
3. To prove also that the continuous session through July and the greater part of August saves an enormous loss of time and energy.



The superintendent of the Newark schools' says regarding these points:

That there has been no physical or mental injury by reason of the eight weeks of school attendance in July and August may be granted as probably true. The testimony of a large number of teachers is to that effect. Some teachers claim to have felt the strain and others decline to remain to teach in July and August, fearing injury to their health. Those who have taught several successive summers state that they have lost buoyancy and spirit because of the continued work, but they do not condemn the plan. The vice principals of the two schools longest established are now out on furlough because of ill health. It would be difficult to prove that the all-year work was the cause of these two breakdowns. The report of the medical department shows a larger number of exclusions in the all-year than in other schools. That might well be expected, because the schools are open longer and are larger. It is reasonably certain that there is no widespread injury to the health of children or teachers, or if there be injury to anyone it can not be definitely fixed as due to the all-year plan. The facts available are at least not sufficient to contradict the theory.

It is extremely doubtful whether the all-year plan saves an enormous loss of time and energy. It is true that in June much time is spent in the traditional schools in reviews and in helping the children to organize their knowledge into usable form for examinations. That is clearly a part of the educational process, and it is an error to regard it as lost or wasted effort. There is value in going over old examination questions even, for such practice assists in clarifying and classifying what has been learned and in fixing it better in memory. The fact that many immature and unfit pupils have entered the high schools seems to prove that the saving of this time is not justified; in fact, that attempted acceleration for pupils of elementary school grade is doubtful both as to its wisdom and its results.

The theory that pupils can be accelerated to the point of saving two years in an all-year elementary school is not true. There are three important reasons which make the theory fallacious. The first is the constantly changing enrollment in the schools, due to the shifting population; the second, the five reorganizations each year, the additional one due to the summer vacation; the third, the criticism of the immaturity of all-year pupils and their failure in the high schools. The latter criticism is now causing a retardation of the children in the elementary schools.

The failure to secure acceleration of pupils as theoretically claimed for all-year schools, the impossibility of maintaining a stable and satisfactory organization throughout the year and of coordinating well such organization with the traditional school system, the unwise practice of sending immature and poorly prepared pupils into the high schools rather than making them as strong as possible in the elementary studies, are serious faults of the all-year system. The cost of the all-year schools is also a matter for careful consideration. Several of the smaller cities that have tried the all-year plan have discontinued it.

One or two experiments, however, are not sufficient to prove or disprove whether it is desirable to organize the schools of the country

<sup>1</sup> Corson, David B., All-year schools: Newark School Bul., pp. 140-150, April, 1924.



on an all-year plan. Other experiments with this type of organization will be watched with interest.

The technical high school of Omaha, Nebr., has been operating 48 weeks a year for the past 7 years, and according to the superintendent of schools the long term has proved very satisfactory. He cites the following advantages of the plan:

1. The continuous use of the school plant, which indicates good business management and economy.
2. The holding power of the school. This school formerly had a two-year commercial course, practically 90 per cent of the pupils taking the course. We give no two-year courses now—they are all full four-year in every department.
3. It enables the bright and energetic pupil to finish the course in three years.
4. Having a greater use of the school building, pupils are able to move more rapidly through the system and thus make a clearance for others who want to attend—again economy.
5. A pupil may of necessity be absent any quarter, fall, winter, summer, or spring, with the loss of only 12 weeks, instead of a full semester's work.

Recently the schools of Nashville, Tenn., were organized on an all-year plan. The superintendent of schools of that city says:

We were not deterred by the failure of the experiment elsewhere, but firmly believed in the necessity for and the flexibility of continuous all-year training.

The school year in Nashville has been divided into four terms of 12 weeks each; classes are started at the beginning of each quarter. The summer term differs in no way from the three others in subjects taught or in amount of work covered.

After the brief trial of the all-year plan, the superintendent of the Nashville schools says that the results confirmed the belief that there was real demand for educational opportunities at all times, and that better results through continuous occupation were attained in all the things regarded as of prime importance in the training of the child—regularity, punctuality, attention to duty, contentment, cheerful obedience to authority, health of body, mind, and soul.

Mr. Theo. Fulton, principal, Jefferson High School, Los Angeles, Calif., makes the following deductions from his study of reports and answers to questionnaires regarding the all-year school:<sup>a</sup>

1. The all-year school is an interesting experiment, differing considerably from the organization of the ordinary 10 months' school. It is yet in the experimental stage but has received more commendation than criticism.
2. Success of the plan may very largely depend upon—
  - (a) Climatic conditions—favorable here.
  - (b) Desire and need of a section of a city for such a type of school—involving summer idle time and economic pressure for early graduation to enable pupils to become breadwinners.
3. School units involved should include at least one senior high, one junior high, and two or more elementary schools. Schools emphasizing vocational

<sup>a</sup> Los Angeles School Journal, Feb. 4, 1924.



training would probably best serve the purposes of such an experiment. The very expensive shop and commercial equipment would thus be utilized for one-fifth more of the days in the school year.

4. Benefits of the full-year system would accrue to certain groups of pupils, if results in Milwaukee, Omaha, and Newark may be taken as a basis for any conclusion. These groups are:

- (a) Over age.
- (b) Mentally slow or inferior.
- (c) Mentally superior.

5. Benefits would also accrue to teachers in the all-year school.

- (a) Increase in salary would permit plans for further study and improvement in the profession.
- (b) After continuous service for two or more years, one or more quarters could be utilized for rest or travel.

6. The more frequent changes of classes and shorter periods between promotion would permit a closer check on curricula and adjustment of details.

7. The expense involved in the operation of a group of four-quarter schools would be greater than the expense of 10 months' schools plus summer-vacation schools.

8. The larger number of pupils graduated, the saving of time in the child's school life, the elimination of long vacations, resulting in great loss of interest and efficiency, and the utilization of expensive plants, now idle in summer-vacation time, could be set up against the expense mentioned in deduction No. 7.

9. The four-quarter plan, properly organized, would represent better business administration as applied to school affairs.

That children should be kept poring over books for five hours a day for 48 weeks can not be defended. But the old-time school with nothing but the three R's has passed away. More and more attention is given to what are termed special activities, and still more time could be given them if the all-year plan were adopted. The real all-year school will come into existence when it broadens its work so as to give more time to play, handwork, and other activities that do not now receive much attention. After such a program children probably would not enter high school so immature, as much immaturity may be due to the fact that they have been held to a narrow program of studies.

#### IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHERS IN SERVICE

There seems to be no abatement in the efforts to provide means for the improvement of teachers in service, but the plan of holding a teachers' institute for several days at a time is no longer considered the best means of improving teachers. Attendance at summer school is considered so far superior to attendance at teachers' institutes that many school boards are providing additional increase in salary for those teachers who attend the summer session of such schools. A plan promising much is that of assigning some project, as the preparation of courses of study, to groups of teachers. In Oakland, Calif., for example, more than 700 of the 1,500 teachers have been actively engaged in the work of curriculum revision,



working on committees under the leadership of what is known as the supervision council.

#### DEMONSTRATION LESSONS

No doubt plans for the self-improvement of teachers originating with the teachers themselves are better than those that are superimposed upon them. As an illustration of a plan for self-improvement that of Oakland, Calif., may be cited. The principal features of the plan are:

(1) A system of demonstration lessons, (2) courses of professional study, (3) a permanent project and exhibit library, (4) a teachers' professional library maintained in connection with the administrative offices of the superintendent of schools.

In a circular issued by the superintendent of the Oakland schools, special attention is given to improvement of teachers by means of demonstration lessons. Several types of demonstration lessons are provided: (1) Demonstrations given by the supervisors as instructors, the teachers acting the part of pupils; (2) demonstrations by supervisors with classes of pupils; (3) demonstrations by the classroom teacher at work in her own room; demonstrations through exhibitions of school work.

#### SABBATICAL LEAVE.

The granting of sabbatical leave seems to be meeting with favor from some of the school boards of the country. Recently the New York Board of Education granted sabbatical leaves of absence to 150 teachers, all of whom had been in the service of the city public schools for 19 years or more. The leaves take effect February 1, 1925, and will continue until September 1, 1925. They are granted for study, travel, or the recovery of health. The plan is financed without expense to the board of education, sufficient amounts being deducted from the salaries of the teachers on leave to pay for substitute service during their absence.

Among the smaller cities that have adopted a plan for sabbatical leave for teachers, Pueblo, Colo., may be mentioned. In that school system a teacher of 10 or more years' service may be granted a sabbatical year to attend an educational institution of higher learning for the purpose of improving her professional equipment as a teacher, and shall be allowed for such year one-half of the annual salary she would receive if actually employed in the schools. No teacher, however, shall receive during the sabbatical leave more than \$900. Not more than three members of the teaching force may be absent at any one time for such courses; and the college, university, or normal school attended, as well as the character of the course selected, must be approved by the superintendent of schools.



## RATINGS

One of the purposes of teacher rating is no doubt to show the teacher her strong and her weak points, but too frequently teacher-rating schemes have been used merely as a means of determining whether a teacher shall or shall not receive an increase in salary or whether she shall be retained in the school system. A rating scheme that is not open to the inspection of the teachers has practically no value as a means of improving teachers. Rating schemes that may be used cooperatively by supervisors and teachers, not as a means of determining salary increases but as a means of supervision, undoubtedly are of great value in improving teachers in service. Many superintendents are issuing for the teachers' use facsimiles of the rating plans that had formerly been used by the supervisors only. Other superintendents are issuing rating schemes which have been devised for the exclusive use of teachers, so that the teachers may learn to know themselves, to find their strong points and their weak ones.

## THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Every child is affected by the elementary school curriculum, since all children are required to attend school for a certain number of years. Many never get beyond the sixth grade, and many of those completing the sixth grade do not enter high school. It is thus evident that the elementary-school curriculum should be given at least as much attention as the high-school curriculum.

Not enough thought has been devoted to the elementary school, but with the advent of better prepared elementary-school supervisors, principals, teachers, and research workers, the elementary school is coming into more prominence.

All authorities in education agree that the time is at hand for a thorough revision of the elementary as well as the secondary program of studies. In fact the entire program from the kindergarten to and including the first two years of college is in need of revision. New studies have forced themselves upon the schools until the question has been raised as to whether the course of study has been enriched or impoverished. Dr. Charles McMurry, commenting upon the necessity of a revision of the elementary curriculum says:<sup>2</sup>

We have now in the schools a troublesome multiplicity of studies. As we go on increasing the number of studies and topics, the time spent on each subject must be decreased. With twice as many studies on the docket, each can receive only half as much time. In a complete up-to-date school we now have about 16 or 18 studies, twice as many as of old. A seventh grade class was reciting in 11 different subjects in one day. Five or six lessons a day would be far better. This multiplication of studies makes for short and snappy treatment of topics. For important subjects the time allowed is wholly

<sup>2</sup> How to Organize the Curriculum, by Charles McMurry, Macmillan Co., New York.



inadequate. Because of this shortage of time, teachers and textbooks are compelled to abbreviate and epitomize. Many of our textbooks in the middle and upper grades and in the high schools show this tendency to shorten and condense topics to a remarkable degree. This crowding of many studies upon the school program has produced a sketchy and superficial method of study. The whole course of study tends to become a memorized table of contents rather than an interesting and instructive development of knowledge. Stated in this form the result is simply distressing.

Such a condensed and overcrowded course of study breeds a host of evils. It leads both teachers and children into a bog where they fail to find sure footing. Crowded with this excessive variety of knowledge children lose confidence in themselves and look upon studies as a bore. They fall into a dull memorizing scheme of study that fits the requirements, while thinking and doing and all the higher activities are blighted. This fatal effort to condense knowledge actually fosters the two most serious blunders that can be made in teaching: First, it abolishes concrete illustrations and reasoning processes from instruction; second, it imposes upon children the dry schedules and formularies of a sapless knowledge.

Our conclusion is that while our course of study has been flooded with this excess of riches brought by new subjects, the outcome is a steady deterioration through condensation of textbooks into outlines, summaries, and what may be called catalogues of topics; in other words, impoverishment of studies.

The foregoing describes the condition of the elementary school curriculum in most cities; but now that the need of curriculum revision is seen, various organizations, schools of education, State and national committees, and bureaus of educational research are engaged in studying the problem. Several cities have revised their courses of study with a view to simplifying them and with certain objectives in mind. They have not resorted to the use of scissors and paste jar, but have made first-hand studies to determine what should be included in and what omitted from a particular course, and how the various studies may be so organized that they are not isolated from one another—as is the case at present in many of the schools of the country, each subject being taught without any relation to any other subject.

Several city-school systems, as Detroit, Mich., and Long Beach, Calif., have formulated courses of study designed to secure progress at the normal rate for all pupils. At Long Beach, for example, it is the policy of the school to develop two modifications of the regular, or Y course of study. One of these, the X course, is a maximum or enriched course; the other, the Y course, provides only for the minimum essentials. The Z courses are for normal pupils. The superintendent of schools, in describing them, says:

If school organization makes any subnormal pupil a member of a Z class the course can not be considered as intended to meet his needs. Teachers should guard against the belief that a slow pupil is necessarily subnormal.

The effort to bridge the gap between the kindergarten and the first grade should not go unnoticed. For many years the first-grade



teachers gave slight attention to what was taught the children in kindergarten. The tendency now is for these teachers to build upon the foundation laid by the kindergarten teachers. Several kindergarten-primary courses of study have been prepared to assist in unifying the work of the kindergarten and the primary-school grades.

One of these courses is that prepared by a committee of principals, supervisors, and teachers of Los Angeles, Calif. In the course in language-art, for example, the first-grade work is built upon the work of the kindergarten; the same is true for number and nature study. In number work the kindergarten child begins with very concrete work, which is continued on through the second grade, with steps of increasing difficulty.

### THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

For many years the junior high school was a mere hazy conception. Finally it became a reality in a few school systems. To-day junior high schools are numbered by the hundreds. Many school superintendents who have organized one or two junior high schools are planning to organize more, and most of those who have not organized such schools are planning to do so at the earliest possible moment. The junior high school is beyond the experimental stage. All that remains now is to adopt it as rapidly as conditions permit and to study its various problems in administration and organization.

The junior high school movement has swept the country because school men and others have long been convinced that there are certain defects in the conventional type of organization on the 8-4 plan. The purpose of the junior high school in general is to remedy these defects. By pointing out some of the recognized shortcomings of the 8-4 plan of organization, it is clear what purposes the junior high school serves.

Every child must come into possession of the school arts, or the tools, but it is believed that these can be acquired in less than eight years. At present in some cities of the country the elementary-school course is only seven years in length, and there is no evidence to show that the children completing a seven-year course do not have the school arts well enough mastered to begin high-school work. It is now known that a child can begin junior high-school work after six years in the elementary grades. In fact, a 5-3-3 plan has a few advocates. Several cities already have the plan in operation. Surely by the end of the sixth grade a child should be able to take up secondary school work such as is offered in leading junior high schools of the country. Some years ago very few persons attended an elementary school more than 50 or 60 months, especially those residing in the rural and small-town district, yet



many of them began formal high-school work with this amount of preparation. Now it requires 72 or 80 months to complete an elementary course of eight years.

It is evident that the elementary-school work has been stretched out over two more years than are necessary. In schools organized on the conventional 8-4 plan the work of the seventh and eighth grades repeats to a very great extent that of the fifth and sixth grades. In the fifth grade the pupil studies common and decimal fractions and again in the seventh. He studies percentage and interest in the sixth grade and again in the eighth. In the fifth grade he studies geography from a small textbook and in the seventh grade the same topics from a larger book. All this repetition is unnecessary.

The seventh and eighth grade work of the conventional school looks backward, whereas it should look forward, so that the pupils may do better the things ahead of them—whether it be work in school, store, factory, or office. General introductory courses in the seventh and eighth grades are now recognized as having such a forward look. That such courses are better, whether the pupil continues in school after completing the junior high school or whether he drops out of school, is now pretty generally conceded.

One of the defects of the old 8-4 system was that pupils when entering high school were confronted with an array of curricula and courses about which they knew nothing. They were told to elect a curriculum and then possibly courses within the curriculum. They had had no inkling of the nature of the high-school course. Algebra and geometry were mere terms, as were Latin, French, social science, biology, physics, and chemistry. The general course in mathematics, physical science, social science, languages, manual arts, and other subjects provided in the junior high school introduces the pupils to the specialized courses in the senior high school by permitting them to explore their interests, aptitudes, and capacities. In the manual arts, for instance, a boy may explore in many lines, so that if he leaves school at the end of the junior high school course he will have a better idea for which trade he is fitted; and if he remains to enter senior high school, he will know which of the technical or trade courses he can pursue with most profit.

Prof. Thomas Briggs,<sup>10</sup> speaking of exploratory courses with references to their value in enabling pupils to elect wisely, says:

This exploration, then, gives each pupil some knowledge of the general field more exhaustively studied in higher courses, and thus enables him to choose more wisely his future curriculum. Our system of electives in the senior high school and in college presupposes an intelligent and informed elector; under the old system he might be intelligent but not informed. If, as is quite possible, such exploring courses should lead a pupil into a general elective which later he might wish to change, he still could do so and not be

<sup>10</sup> Proc. of 52d Convocation, University State of New York, 1916, pp. 97-100.



more retarded in his program than most pupils are to-day. Exploration at the age of 12 to 14 is much more economical than it is two or more years later.

This is a point that can not be too much emphasized in enumerating the purposes of the junior high school. General introductory courses in the junior high school make possible two things that were not possible in the old grammar-school grades, namely, (1) exploration, so that a pupil may elect wisely when he enters senior high school, (2) a good general education rather than a drill upon the three R's.

One of the purposes of the junior high school is to economize time—not necessarily in the sense that pupils will spend fewer years in school, but that they may employ their time more profitably. No doubt after a thorough reorganization of the program of studies from the kindergarten up, and not from the college down, much more can be accomplished than is now the case in the 12 years devoted to elementary and secondary instruction. Possibly one or two years of junior college work could be done within the 12 years, thus saving the city boy and girl two years in college. This, however, is a matter for experimentation.

#### FORMS OF ORGANIZATION

The larger cities have uniformly adopted the 6-3-3 form of organization. In the smaller cities there is not such uniformity of practice. Some of these have adopted the 6-3-3 plan and others the 6-6 plan. In some, schools have been organized on the 6-2-4 plan. The 6-3-3 plan, however, seems to be the prevailing one and to meet with the favor of most authorities on secondary education. In some few cities where the 11-year public-school system is in operation, the schools have been reorganized on the 5-3-3 plan, which is undoubtedly better than the 7-4 plan in that this latter plan does not offer any opportunity for exploratory courses. The 5-3-3 plan has the same purpose as does the 6-3-3 plan. The only question to be answered is whether the elementary-school course should be shortened to five years. Possibly this can be done in those cities where children enter the first grade of the elementary school at seven years of age, as is the case in San Antonio, Tex., in which city the schools have been reorganized on the 5-3-3 plan. Experimentation with this type of organization will be watched with interest.

#### HOUSING

In the larger cities the tendency is to erect separate junior high school buildings having their own organization. In some of the medium-sized cities a modified 6-3-3 plan has been adopted by erect-



ing a combination junior-senior high school building, the junior high school occupying one section of the building and the senior high school another section. The special activities rooms—as auditorium, gymnasium, and shop—are used in common. One principal is in charge of both schools, but the actual duties are often delegated to an assistant. It is apparent that in a school system enrolling about 1,000 pupils in grades 7 to 12, this type of organization is more economical than that of having a separate junior high school building.

In the smaller cities where the secondary school enrollment is only two or three hundred, the junior-senior high school usually constitutes one unit. Certain advantages may be secured by housing the seventh to twelfth year pupils in one building. These may be stated as follows:<sup>11</sup>

1. The seventh and eighth year pupils are benefited by a better material equipment, including the use of the gymnasium and shops of the senior school.
2. The seventh and eight year pupils gradually approach senior high school conditions by personal acquaintance. This bridges the chasm between elementary and secondary school work to a large extent.
3. A feeling of mutual respect and a spirit of mutual helpfulness are created between the teachers of the earlier and later secondary school years.
4. The seventh-year work is better taught (upon the whole) in the 6-6 plan by a more considerable treatment of ninth-year pupils.
5. The one secondary-school principal exerts a more positive and beneficial influence over his pupils by securing two added years for their supervision and guidance.
6. This housing in one building may prove the entering wedge for the introduction of many modern and so-called junior high school ideas of management and method by which the whole six-year period of secondary education may be harmonized.

More may be expected of junior high schools when all the pupils of a city are enrolled in such schools. If there are only a few junior high schools scattered throughout a city the graduates of such schools will have some difficulty in transferring to the regular four-year high school. Once a city has organized one or two junior high schools, some adjustment should be made in the junior high school to the courses offered in the regular high school.

According to the report of the committee that made a survey of the junior high schools of New York City<sup>12</sup>—

Experience has shown that if there are only a few junior high schools scattered throughout the various boroughs so that only a few 9B graduates enter senior high schools from them, those pupils have to encounter not only all the difficulties which pupils meet who go from one school to another, but, in addition, the disadvantages arising from the fact that their classmates are much more familiar with the high-school organization, the teachers, the

<sup>11</sup> The Junior High School in Smaller Cities, by Jas. K. Van Denburgh, Educ. Rev., Feb., 1924.

<sup>12</sup> Survey of Junior High Schools, New York City, 1923.



methods, etc., because they have been in the high school for a year. Assuming that the principals and teachers of the senior high schools are sincerely anxious to aid junior high-school graduates, many problems present themselves which are difficult of solution. If the number of such pupils is small, it is almost impossible to organize them into separate classes or give them special attention. If such pupils are merged with the pupils who have been in the high school for a year, even slight differences in courses of study and textbooks, amount of ground covered, etc., stand out very prominently. These difficulties are removed, however, when, as a result of the organization of a system of junior high schools, large numbers of junior high-school pupils enter grade 10A of the senior high schools each term. Under such circumstances principals of senior high schools should be able to solve whatever problems arise through slight differences in method or subject matter.

Furthermore, it is an unwise educational policy to have two sets of schools—namely, the traditional SB and the junior high schools—in a given neighborhood, by which some pupils attend the first type of school, pursue a uniform course of study through the seventh and eighth years and are transferred to senior high schools at the end of the eighth year, and other pupils attend the junior high schools for the seventh, eighth, and ninth years of instruction.

All experience points to the conclusion that since the organization of a system of junior high schools has been decided upon as an educational policy, steps should be taken to extend it, term by term, as far as practicable, with the ultimate aim of relieving the senior high schools of all or nearly all the pupils of the first year and of having all or nearly all the seventh, eighth, and ninth pupils included in junior high schools.

That there is a certain amount of confusion and irritation between the junior high school and the senior high school in the regular four-year high school is evident, but according to Mr. J. M. Glass,<sup>12</sup> director of Junior high schools for the State of Pennsylvania:

The responsibility for the ninth-year curriculum in 6-3-3 school systems has passed in part and should pass altogether from the senior high school to the junior high school. With the responsibility should also go the opportunity to reconstruct the ninth-year core curriculum in accordance with the reconstruction already initiated in the seventh and eighth years. Insistence by the colleges on 16 college-entrance units constitutes a condition which threatens the full realization of the principle of continuity in the reconstruction of the junior high school curriculum. The present tendency to modify college-accrediting relations in harmony with the objectives of the new 6-3-3 plan should be presented and encouraged until the junior high school is able to carry on unhampered the curriculum reorganization already initiated and partly effected in the seventh and eighth years. The junior high school must be free to make of itself a self-contained and integral unit in the public-school system.

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<sup>12</sup> Curriculum Practices in the Junior High School and Grades 5 and 6.